

The First Letter of St Peter - *Encouraging words for our time.*

By Stephen RevRev

Session Four : Living Stones

Suggested answers

Warm Up Exercise

Simon was given the name ROCK by Jesus (Cephias Aramaic, Petros NT Greek). Look up on Google images of men named Rock or Rocky.

This is my favourite picture of Rock:



As Jesus was going out of the Temple one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings" Mark 13:1 (NASV)

We don't know which disciple said this. However Peter was often the spokesman and referred to as one of his disciples. I would like to think it was Peter who said it.

Artist's Impression of the Temple at the Time of Jesus.



Study the image above. How many of the **different types of stones** mentioned in this week's passage can you identify?

And **Match up**, as far as possible, the following Bible verses with the different types of stones.
This is not an exact exercise, but helps us get into the mind of Simon Peter.

Precious and selected Stones

The second Temple built by Herod was magnificent and many stones were overlaid in gold. This is depicted in this image. Stones carefully chosen and selected in the construction.

Isaiah 28:16 the sovereign LORD says he is laying a precious cornerstone as a sure foundation

Genesis 49:24 God is the Rock of Israel.

Psalms 18:2. God is my rock says King David.

Luke 21:5&6 beautiful stones

Corner or capstones

Plenty of arches with capstones in the picture.

Principally Isaiah 28:16 cornerstone

Rejected stones (Rubble)

We can see some stones obviously discarded by the builders which were not considered good enough.

Principally Psalm 118:19-24

Matthew 21:42 Jesus appropriates Psalm 118 to himself?

Stumbling Stones

In this picture, there are lots of rocks poking up from the ground just waiting to trip someone up.

Principally Isaiah 8:13&14

Leviticus 19:14 people of Israel warned not to be stumbling blocks to others, for fear of God

Romans 9:31&32 Israel stumbles over Jesus

Romans 14:13 not to be a stumbling block to others

In addition, Peter mentions **living Stones**. A few people can be seen going into the temple.

Matthew 16:18 Jesus says that his church will be built on "this rock" either referring to Peter the Rock or Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

Mark 11:15-18 both the temple and living temple to be a "house of prayer"

Mark 14:57&58 Jesus supersedes The Temple

Luke 19:37-44 Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple which occurred in AD70. "The stones will cry out"

John 2:18-20 Jesus the new temple

1 Corinthians 3:16&17 Paul says we are God's temple.

2 Corinthians 3:7&8 Paul says the old covenant written on stone is death

Much intermingling of stone and rock imagery in this passage.

This passage 1 Peter 2:4-10 sounds to me, as a preacher, like a sermon outline. Optional: Write your own sermon outline on this passage (no more than one sheet A4): Classic three point sermon with a good introduction and strong conclusion which draws out the relevance for us today.

My sermon outline is attached separately

Is this stone passage Peter's signature sermon (Acts 4:11) or does it actually relate to the theme of his whole letter? *Discuss with your Bible study partner, if you have one; review your notes so far. You will need to be clear in your mind to solve this one!*

Peter's theme in his first letter, as we have seen previously, is that Jesus is the Messiah - the suffering Messiah.

Peter quotes extensively from Isaiah (the prophet of the suffering servant and messiah): ie. Isaiah 28:16 & 8:14; also previously 1 Peter 1:24 cf Isaiah 40:6-8 and also later 1 Peter 2:22 cf Isaiah 53:9 and 1 Peter 3:14 cf Isaiah 8:12. Peter seeks to show Jesus as the suffering Messiah as foretold by the Prophets.

Peter is writing to suffering ,possibly persecuted, churches. In time of persecution and trial , places of worship are often destroyed or closed. The Christians need to see themselves as the living stones which can continue without need for a temple or buildings?



Israel is a very rocky land. It is full of native rocks that jut up out of the ground which can be tripping stones or stumbling blocks. Jesus, Peter and others are described variously as stumbling blocks in the following passages. What differentiates them? 1 Corinthians 1:23; Matthew 16:23; Matthew 18:6&7. *Actually all about the same issue: - the true will of God can only be found in Jesus"*

How can we avoid being a stumbling block to others?

1 Peter 1:22 "Love one another deeply from the heart."

1 Peter 3:8 " live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble"

1 Peter 4:8 "love each other deeply"

Paul gives practical advice in Romans 14. Specifically 14:13.



The book of Revelation says we will each receive a new name written on a stone from Jesus (Revelation 2:17). Have you any thoughts on what yours might be?

I would be happy with RevRev.